



FORGIVE MY GRIEF

VOL. II

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This is the conclusion of the second installment of FORGIVE MY GRIEF VOL. II. Author of this article is Griscom Morgan of Yellow Springs, Ohio. It is a review of a series of articles which appeared in the JOURNAL OF FORENSIC SCIENCE for July, 1966. The quarterly is published by the AMERICAN ACADEMY OF FORENSIC SCIENCE.

The Warren Commission staff had a number of firm leads as to a possible conspiracy to carry out the assassination and the shooting of Oswald, mostly involving an anti-Castro organization. On March 12th the Commission's staff asked the CIA to investigate them since the Commission depended on existing investigative agencies, and the CIA was the appropriate agency in this case in view of its own involvement in anti-Castro activity. On May 19th the CIA was reminded of this request, but it was not till September 15th when the Commission's Report was about finished that its staff received a perfunctory response from the CIA that did not resolve these questions.

In the original request to the CIA the Commission's staff had stated that "a governmental informant in Chicago connected with the sale of arms to anti-Castro Cubans has reported that such Cubans were behind the Kennedy assassination." Another item listed was a report by a responsible Cuban refugee, Sylvia Odio, referring to a visit from a North American who looked like Lee Oswald and who called himself LEON Oswald. According to Mrs. Odio, one of this man's

associates, LEOPOLDO, said of him, "he told us we Cubans didn't have any guts, because President Kennedy should have been assassinated after the Bay of Pigs . . . and he said it was easy to do it . . . he repeated several times he was an expert shotman."

Yet another piece of evidence referred to in the Commission's request to the CIA was testimony from a New England woman working there for the police, who had previously worked for Jack Ruby, to the effect that Jack Ruby had been a go-between in financing the shipment of arms taken by an army colonel from an army base to be sent to Cuba. In the Commission's request to the CIA it was stated "the name 'Leopoldo' has been mentioned by others who claim that Ruby was associated in an anti-Castro group in the procurement of arms." It is well known that the CIA is a major source of financing for anti-Castro warfare.

The Warren Commission staff did not rest with its request to the CIA for investigation of these anti-Castro leads but continued its investigation and increasingly confirmed them to the point that toward the end of the investigation it urged that these possibilities be reopened for study. The Commission's General Counsel, Rankin, had responded, according to Epstein, that "at this stage, we are supposed to be closing doors, not opening them," and Epstein writes "the issue was never resolved."

In considering the possibility of a conspiracy in the assassination of President Kennedy it now appears necessary to take into consideration not only the possible alternatives of organization and motive of the conspiracy itself, but also possible motives of the government for concealing such a conspiracy. If there had been a pair of unaffiliated mentally unbalanced assassins instead of one, as suggested by Henry Fairlie in the NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE, there would be little point in careful concealment in the interest of "national

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security" of the existence of one assassin still unidentified. If the assassination was the work of southern racists and reactionaries as suggested by Leo Sauvage in his book THE OSWALD AFFAIR, one could not expect the Warren Commission to carefully protect the identity of such assassins. If Southern racists were responsible one might expect General Walker to have some inkling of it, whereas the General has found so little evidence of such involvement that he has at least felt free to express strong suspicion of conspiracy having a key part in the assassination.

At least one widely circulated book has suggested that Castro was responsible for the assassination of President Kennedy. The evidence does not bear this out. The day before the assassination Castro had been talking to Jean Daniel, the distinguished foreign editor of the French L'EXPRESS. In the December 7, 1963 issue of the New Republic M. Daniel quoted Castro as saying of President Kennedy, "I'm convinced that anyone else would be infinitely worse" as president, and M. Daniel found Castro sincerely hoping for Kennedy's reelection. For the same reason the anti-Castro forces DID have motive for the assassination --- as shown in the conversation between Sylvia Odio and "Leopoldo" to which we have referred. In view of the evidence that Jack Ruby was also involved with "Leopoldo" and the high likelihood that the Central Intelligence Agency also was in contact with him through its anti-Castro endeavors, one should at least suspect an interest on the part of Jack Ruby, the CIA and hence of the United States Government for keeping any anti-Castro involvement in the assassination top secret.

If Arlen Specter is right that "The decision of the Commission was not an egregious (flagrant, glaring, gross) use of their discretion," but was the necessary consequence of the President's decision, then the Warren Report ceases to be, in historian Trevor-Roper's term, "slovenly" and must be regarded as an extremely difficult achievement. If the task had been simply to find the truth, the highly qualified staff of the Commission and the FBI would most probably have done a competent job in finding it. But if its task was, as Jay Schwartz conceived it, to add a veneer of prestige by the involvement of important and honored public men to give credence to an already discredited FBI report, it had a much more difficult task to

perform. Specter's statement and Schwartz independently tend to confirm the conclusions of Edward J. Epstein's book INQUEST: "Why did the Commission fail to take cognizance in its conclusions of this evidence of a second assassin? Quite clearly, a serious discussion of this problem would have undermined the dominant purpose of the Commission, namely, the settling of doubts and suspicions. Indeed, if the Commission had made it clear that very substantial evidence indicated the presence of a second assassin, it would have opened up a Pandora's box of doubts and suspicions. In establishing its version of the truth, the Warren Commission acted to reassure the nation and protect the national interest."

Mr. Epstein does not express any recognition that for an assassin to be unexposed and for the motive of the assassination to be undiscovered constitutes a successful assassination. Not only would the assassin be able to escape, but concealment of motive would make possible THE ATTAINMENT OF THE POLITICAL PURPOSES OF THE ASSASSINATION THAT MIGHT BE FRUSTRATED IF THE REAL PURPOSE OF THE ASSASSINATION SHOULD BE DISCLOSED. For Epstein to justify the concealment of a possible conspiracy for reasons of "protecting the national interest" reveals the attitude of the Warren Commission and its staff which had taken him into its confidence.

In a review of a book on the CIA that appeared in the November 12, 1964 New Republic, T. R. Fehrenbach wrote: "All great powers in this untidy world have to keep CIAs and sometimes act like old whores; no realist argues the fact. But only the U. S. seems determined to pretend an innocence no great order-keeping power may long possess." If the government is to keep a "CIA" it should not be surprising that such a bureaucracy should have an impact on domestic political life, or that the concealment of its role would sometimes involve the government in compromising and discreditable predicaments. Among the fifth of a million employees of the Central Intelligence Agency, many were deeply committed and involved in the endeavor to overthrow Castro's government in Cuba, both at the time of the Bay of Pigs and after. It is understandable that the young President who was turning his back on this kind of foreign policy and had discharged Allen Dulles, who had masterminded it may have become the target of men highly skilled in intrigue, political manipulation

and concealment. And it is understandable that the government that so greatly depended on these tools of foreign policy might not want them exposed even to clear up the assassination of a President.